Fostering Belonging in Neurodiverse Teams

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Introductions

• Happily Autistic, (Consultant)
• Jessica Santascoy
• Anne Holland
Supporting Neurodivergent colleagues supports EVERYONE
What is Neurodiversity?

The diversity or variation of cognitive functioning in people. Everyone has a unique brain and therefore different skills, abilities, and needs. Read more about Neurodiversity

Examples of Neurodivergence

- Autism
- Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Dyslexia
- Synesthesia
- Dyspraxia
- Dyscalculia
- Dysgraphia
- Depression/Anxiety
- Hyperlexia
- Tourette's Syndrome
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- PTSD/CPTSD
How we operate

- Different OS (Operating System) - information & sensory input are **processed differently**
Understanding the Spectrum

via Rebecca Burgess, Understanding the Spectrum—A Comic Strip Explanation
Socialization Differences

- **Autistic** communication prioritizes **information**
- **Neurotypical (NT) communication** prioritizes social relationships

“If a person's behavior doesn't make sense to you, it is because you are missing a part of their context. It's that simple.”

- Devon Price
Mental Health Statistics

Anxiety
Diagnosis is 2 to 3 times higher

Depression
Diagnosis is 4 times higher

Suicide
2/3 of us considered
1/3 have attempted
How to Reduce Misunderstandings

● Be direct & set parameters
● Follow verbal communication with written
● Use a meeting platform with live captioning
● Break info down into smaller chunks
Barriers to Successful Employment

Neurodivergent people who are employed have generally gotten there by masking.

Risk of masking
- Not healthy or sustainable
- Leads to burnout (often dropping out of the workforce)
- Unable to contribute to the full extent of ability
- Risks of not masking
Anecdotes

NASA@ My Library team
Creating space for a Neurodiverse team

- Understand your organization's policies and speak with HR when appropriate
- Review interview processes and performance metrics
- Ask
- Flexibility
- What to do when someone discloses
Breakout groups
Q&A
Thank you!

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